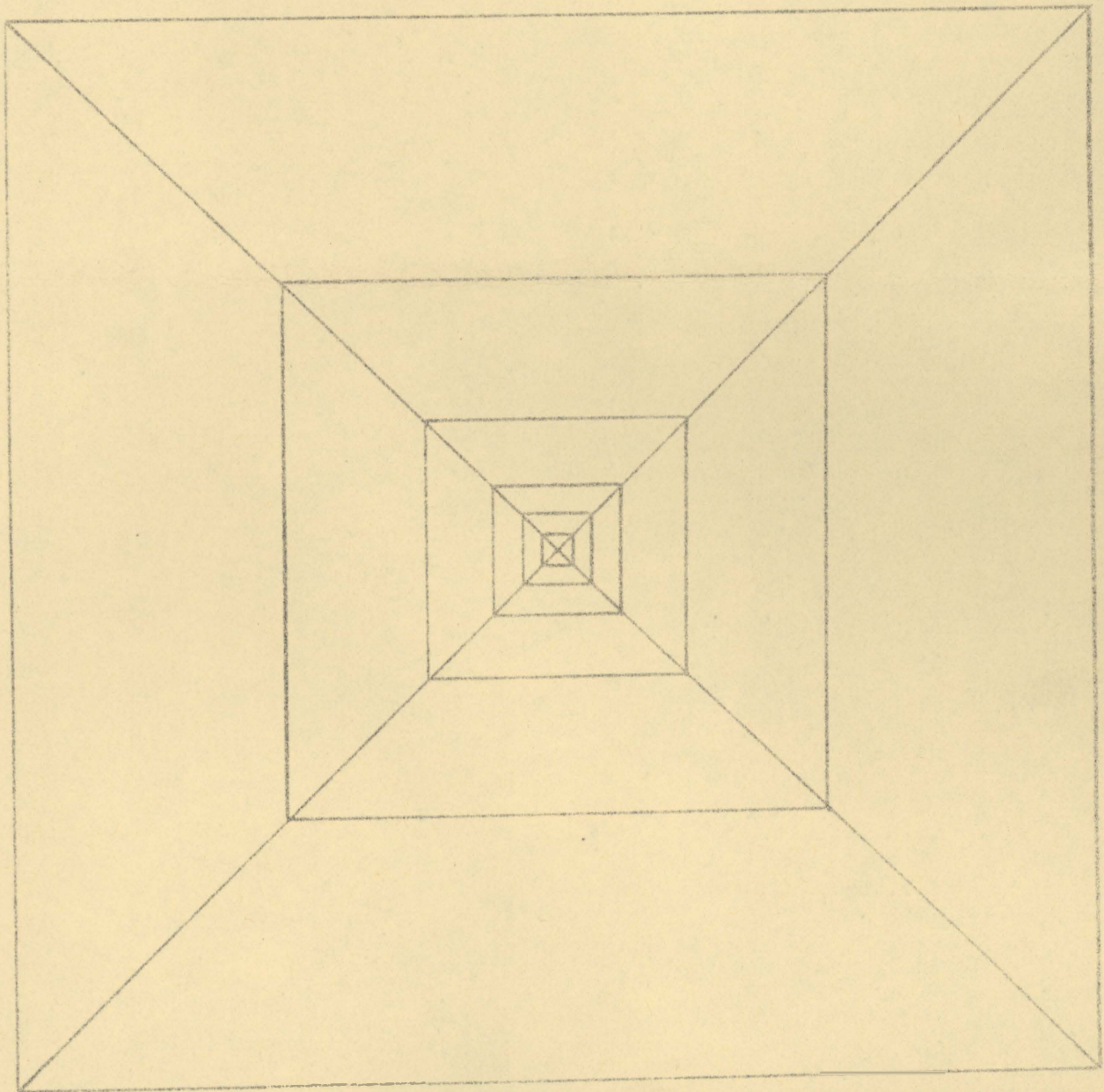


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Editorial

by Harry Griesberg & Keith Basterfield.

CHANGES TO THE CENTRE.

After several years of jointly running the Centre, both of us are retiring from our roles as co-ordinators. We now have increased personal commitments which means we do not have the time to put into the Centre as in the past. Also, we feel a need to change our role in ufology. Both of us wish to pursue more independent research in future, away from the administrative position as co-ordinators. Therefore, effective immediately, the Centre's NEW ADDRESS will change from P.O. Box 546 Gosford NSW 2250 TO P.O. BOX 229 PROSPECT SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5082.

The Centre's new management will be Frank Gillespie, Lad Godic and Bill Chalker, none of which really need an introduction as they are all well known within Australia and also well respected.

We both wish to thank you all for your support in the past, and we look forward to your continued support for ACUFOS in the future, just as we both will be supporting the new co-ordinators

We both feel that the Centre has achieved more in Australian ufology than pre-Centre days, and we are both sure that the Centre will achieve even more in the future with your continued support.

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Important Notice: As with all things these days, reluctantly, the price of subscription to the Journal must rise. Effective immediately, six issues of the Journal will cost \$10 Australian. This is only the second rise in 7 years.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF ANOMALOUS PHENOMENA

by Mark Moravec . .

A recent important development in British ufology has been the establishment of a new organisation called the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena (ASSAP). Researchers who had been active in the Society for Psychical Research and various UFO and fortean groups, met together and decided to form ASSAP in June 1981. The first issue of ASSAP News explains that the organisation was established in response to a long-felt need at two levels:

"Faced with a multitude of small and often little-known societies dealing with narrow aspects of paranormal or unexplained phenomena (we prefer the more neutral term 'anomalous') it is little wonder that members of the general public are bemused. This happens at a time when interest has never been higher, yet authoritative comment scarcely at a lower ebb. It is understandable also that most people do not know where to turn for informed guidance on these matters, or for sympathetic help in dealing with spontaneous happenings that could range from apparitions and poltergeists to UFO sightings."

"Then, researchers in various fields of the anomalous have themselves felt constrained by the suffocating specialisation of existing organisations. For some time talk between these researchers has centred on the setting up of a body that could take a truly multi-disciplinary approach, transcend the confines of individual subjects, and examine the field of investigation more widely, comparing and contrasting more meaningfully. So ASSAP was born." (ASSAP News 1, Oct 1981)

The 1981 meeting decided the main objectives of ASSAP would be:

- "1. To obtain, store, process, and disseminate information concerning those areas of human experience and observed phenomena for which no generally acceptable explanation is as yet forthcoming.
2. To encourage and aid investigation and research into those phenomena, by the creation or coordination of investigative groups, and by the provision of consultative resources, technical facilities, etc.
3. To provide a multi-disciplinary forum for the exchange of views and information concerning these phenomena."

"ASSAP's field of interest comprises those phenomena which are reasonably alleged to occur, but for which no explanation seems to be forthcoming within the scope of current scientific knowledge. By its very nature, no precise limit can be set to the field thus comprised, nor would it be desirable to do so. Subjects such as altered states of consciousness, apparitions, clairvoyance, spontaneous human combustion, dowsing, the EVP, extra-sensory perception, falls from the sky, glossolalia, hallucinations, hauntings, healing, hypnosis, incorruptibility, levitation, ley lines, magic, materialisation, metal-bending, miracles, multiple personality, OOB's, poltergeists, possession, precognition, PK, reincarnation, Spiritualism, stigmata, survival, synchronicity, telepathy, UFO's, visions, and Yetis are just a selection typical of the field of interest." (Comm on Ground, 2, Aug 1981)

"ASSAP will promote the highest scientific standards of investigation, reporting and discussion. It will have no corporate views or opinions and will discourage dogmatism in its members. All views and no views will be grist to our particular mill, for we consider that by the open debate of theories arising from critical observation we shall

arrive ultimately at a better understanding of truth." The Association hopes to harness and coordinate existing people and groups who are currently engaged in active research but who are isolated and unaware of what others are doing.

ASSAP is disseminating its findings through its newsletter-style ASSAP News and the thought-provoking quarterly, Common Ground, edited by Kevin McClure.

What makes ASSAP different from what has gone on before in British ufology? Mainly two things: its stress on a scientific but open-minded approach to research, and its expanded interdisciplinary programme which undertakes to examine a variety of anomalous phenomena, an approach which may lead to greater insights than just restricting itself to UFOs.

Further information may be obtained from the ASSAP Membership Secretary, Janice Bagnall, 6 Colwyn House, Cosser Street, London SE1 7DY, England.

A NEW DISEASE DISCOVERY! - COMET FLU?

(by) John Prytz

The origin of life on the earth has had many and varied theories proposed over the years. More often than not, these have been conflicting and controversial. They can be grouped into four broad subdivisions. In order of historical order these have been:

- I) Religious - Theories of divine creation.
- II) Spontaneous Generation - Terrestrial life forms arising from non-life via the introduction of some "vital force" over for all practical purposes instantaneous time periods.
- III) Panspermia - Spores and seeds arriving from the cold dark reaches of outer space. Variations include the "Alien Garbage" theories where aeons ago visiting intelligent aliens held a picnic on the barren earth, and well...here we are!
- IV) Chemical Evolution - Terrestrial life forms evolving from a series of chemical reactions producing simple organic compounds, complex organic compounds, simple life forms, complex organisms over geologic time periods, and without the need or introduction of "vital forces".

The first of these explanations lies outside the bounds of modern scientific investigation and is a matter of personal faith. Hence, it is not a matter for consideration in this paper.

The second theory was shown to be incorrect in a famous series of experiments by that famous French scientist Louis Pasteur.

The third of the above has fallen into disfavour when experiments have shown that Chemical Evolution is not only possible but probable when given the laws of chemistry coupled with the geo-chemical history of the early earth.

Chemical Evolution is hence the current front runner in modern origin of life investigations.

However, recent astronomical discoveries (7) have aided a slow swing of the credibility pendulum back towards the Panspermia theory while not however detracting from the evidence offered by Chemical Evolution. They may in fact be two sides of the same coin with a shift from earth's surface to unknown reaches of outer space. These discoveries centre around: 1) the discoveries of ever increasingly complex organic molecules in interstellar space, in particular within dust clouds; 2) the discoveries of simple and complex organic compounds coupled with possible fossil and alien "organized elements" in carbonaceous chondrites, a form of meteor that have impacted the earth time and again. These chemicals have been shown to be indigenous and not the result of terrestrial contamination; and 3) comets, whose chemical composition mirrors the chemical composition of terrestrial life forms.

Recently, two investigators, Sir Fred Hoyle (who I'm sure needs no introduction) and Dr. Chandra Wickramasinghe, Professor of Applied Mathematics and Astronomy at University College, Cardiff, have combined to utilize data from cometary astronomy to not only propose a geologic distant origin of life on earth through cometary influence, but suggest such influence continues today. The journal New Scientist introduces one of their articles (4) by the following abstract:

"An impact of a comet-type body on the earth about 4 billion years ago could have led to the start of terrestrial life. Even today continuing influxes of cometary debris may bring to the planet viruses and bacteria responsible for diseases of plants and animals."

The alien material brought to earth does of course not have to be via a direct impact (which in fact might destroy such life forms) but the interception of the earth with a comet's tail (such as in 1910 with the famous Halley's comet) could serve as well.

Once in the earth's upper atmosphere, the cometary material with associated alien germs can get carried down towards the lower atmosphere through settling and atmosphere mixing, hence to the surface mixed in with various forms of precipitation. Once on earth, the alien organisms are free to infect the local populace. Hoyle believes the ideal conditions arise when the rain (or whatever form of precipitation) evaporates just prior to impact with the earth's surface, conditions he says occur frequently within Australia!

The new life forms arrive regularly on earth causing new and previously unreported outbreaks of plague and disease - even flu epidemics.

The authors offer as proof their own scientific statistical investigation of flu epidemics in British schools. Another New Scientist abstract states: (5)

"An analysis of the attack rates of influenza in some schools in the west of Britain...provides evidence against any marked person-to-person transmission of this disease during an epidemic. Geographical variations of attack patterns with what was apparently the 'red flu' (HINI) subtype in different schools indicate that the virus settled down through the atmosphere from above, with a very patchy incidence at ground level."

Hoyle believes that the probability of the cometary seeding theory of cosmic-influenza being wrong are "hundreds of millions to one against." (3) He cites evidence that where one school would have hundreds of children down with flu, another school just hundreds of yards away would not have a single case, something a theory of highly infectious diseases is at a loss to account for.

Obviously this cosmic-germ theory challenges many long held beliefs about the spread of viral infections. The idea has thus received anything but a warm open-arm scientific reception. Stoney silence has been more the order of the day.

However, one rebuttal has come from Dr. Geoffrey Schild, National Institute for Biological Standards and Control, London. His New Scientist article is abstracted: (8)

"The evidence for rapid spread and effective transmission of the 'red flu' HINI virus among communities of young individuals has been clearly documented and accounted for by serological and clinical studies."

Just as obviously, one shouldn't take Sir Fred Hoyle (and of course Professor Wickramasinghe) lightly. Even if the disease part of cometary influence proves to be incorrect, that still leaves comets as a harbinger of life on earth. Should any form or fossil of alien life forms akin to bacteria and viruses ever be discovered within cometary bodies, then the implications for the origin of life on the earth and hence the occurrence of life throughout the universe are obvious.

It is acknowledged of course that Hoyle's theory of cometary influence on earth isn't really new. The ancients believed that comets were often bad omens and the bringers of plague and pestilence to earth. However, their beliefs were based on fear and superstition, not scientific reasoning and investigations.

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PSIUFO PHENOMENA: A STUDY OF UFOS AND THE PARANORMALby Mark Moravec.

PSIUFO phenomena are those cases where UFO and paranormal phenomena apparently overlap. Included in this definition are cases which allegedly involve mental communications; poltergeists, apparitions, healings, ghostlights and time lapses/"abductions". Since my first paper on PSIUFO phenomena was presented in 1979 at Sydney's UFOCON 4, I have been engaged in collecting together and analysing the relevant Australian reports. The results of this research has now been published by the Australian Centre for UFO Studies in a 137-page document titled, PSIUFO Phenomena: A Study of UFOs and the Paranormal.

What, in brief, does the report contain?

- * Definitions and case examples of UFO cases involving mental communications, poltergeists, apparitions, healings, ghostlights, time lapses and "abductions"
- * A catalogue and analysis of 88 Australian cases, with particular emphasis on case reliability
- * An outline of historical and geographical trends
- * An examination of natural phenomena such as ball lightning and earthquake lights which may be responsible for some reports
- * The relevance of hypnosis, altered states of consciousness and other psychological processes
- * How to properly investigate PSIUFO phenomena, including specialised questionnaires for the investigator
- * A report evaluation system which rates reports on the basis of documentation level, time lapse before investigation, witness credibility, supportive physical evidence and strangeness
- * Natural causes of poltergeist and haunting effects
- * The possible explanations: psychological, paranormal or extraterrestrial?
- * Suggested directions for future research
- * The implications of PSIUFO phenomena on our understanding of anomalies, the human mind and the world at large

The aim of my report was not to merely give a dry catalogue of case summaries, but to discuss in detail such issues as the possible explanations for PSIUFO phenomena; the problems facing the investigator who probes these often complex reports; and the implications of PSIUFO cases for our attempts at understanding the nature of UFO and paranormal phenomena, and the nature of the larger reality around us.

PSIUFO Phenomena: A Study of UFOs and the Paranormal is available from ACUFOS, PO Box 229, PROSPECT SA 5082 Australia. The cost is \$ 15 Aust. postpaid. Overseas orders should be remitted by an international money order made payable to ACUFOS.

(by) John Prytz

Compiler's Note: Was the earth seeded by complex organic molecules, even simple life forms from outer space? If so, have similar events occurred on other receptive worlds throughout the galaxy, maybe to evolve into life; life with intelligence, and develop a technological civilisation capable of visiting us and producing the UFO phenomena? This nonsense idea has been eroded by surprise discovery after surprise discovery of highly complex organic molecules in interstellar space, where a generation ago no scientist would have dared to make such way-out predictions. Today, the birthplace of the stars, and the chemical processes in interstellar space, could well be intimately connected with our origin, the origin of alien beings, and the whole UFO phenomena. This data base reveals the discoveries and implications of this new highly exciting field of astronomical research.

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